



COMMANDER  
NAVAL AIR FORCES

# Press Release

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Jan. 22, 2015

PRESS RELEASE #: 2015-002

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Naval Air Forces Holds Change of Command

SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) held a change of command ceremony aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) at Naval Air Station North Island Jan. 22.

During the ceremony, [Vice Adm. Mike Shoemaker](#) relieved [Vice Adm. David H. Buss](#) as CNAF.

While serving as the Navy's "Air Boss" since October 2012, Buss ensured the material readiness, administration, and training for all Naval Aviation commands and provided operationally ready squadrons and aircraft carriers to the fleet. He also led the Naval Aviation Enterprise, a partnership between Navy and Marine Corps aviation organizations that work closely to improve processes for more efficient and effective Naval Aviation forces.

During his tenure, Buss oversaw the fleet acceptance of the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye; led the developmental testing of the F-35C Lightning II and the X-47B unmanned aerial system aboard the aircraft carrier; ensured the readiness of USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) and USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) prior to their deployments in support of Operation Inherent Resolve; and prepared the first operational deployment of the P-8A Poseidon and the Navy's inaugural manned-unmanned expeditionary squadron aboard a littoral combat ship.

Retired Adm. Joseph W. Prueher was the guest speaker. Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Harry B. Harris, Jr. presented Buss with the Distinguished Service Medal on behalf of the President for displaying extraordinary strategic vision, analytical insight and inspirational leadership as CNAF.

Buss thanked all those who supported him throughout his career and commended Shoemaker on his superb leadership.

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“I turn over an aviation force today of which I am, and you should be, very, very proud,” said Buss. “Not only do we continue to excel in combat and have so continuously for the past 13 plus years, but we continue to set the conditions on a strategic playing field for decades of future success as a warfighting force for unprecedented transition into new and ever-increasingly capable aircraft, manned and unmanned alike, and our next generation aircraft carrier – the USS Gerald R. Ford.”

“When coupled with new operating concepts, new technology, and bright, sharp forward-thinking minds in Naval Aviation today, our strategic relevance and our importance to this nation tomorrow should never be – and must never be – in question,” said Buss.

Donna Buss, Vice Adm. Buss’ wife, was also recognized for her time and dedication to support Navy families and presented her with the Department of the Navy Superior Public Service Award.

Immediately following the change of command, Buss retired after 36 years of Naval service.

Shoemaker addressed the men and women of CNAF for the first time as the Navy’s seventh “Air Boss” and described the value of Naval Aviation.

“I am incredibly honored and humbled by the opportunity to ‘fleet up’ and take over as your new Air Boss,” said Shoemaker. “Those in uniform know all too well the constant demand for Naval Forces, Naval Aviation in particular, that we continue to see. Our combatant commanders clearly value the strategic options and flexibility that carrier strike groups and our expeditionary aviation forces bring to their areas of responsibility. The challenge that lies ahead of us is how we continue to sustain the capacity to generate those forces, and ensure they are going forward with the right capabilities to operate where needed...all in a fiscal environment characterized by ever-increasing uncertainty.”

Shoemaker is a 1982 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and native of St. Petersburg, Florida. As a flag officer, he served as assistant commander, Navy Personnel Command for Career Management (PERS-4) and Naval Air Force Atlantic. His command tours include Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 105, VFA-106, Carrier Air Wing 17, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 9 and CSG 3.

CNAF, headquartered at Naval Air Station North Island, effectively mans, trains and equips 10 combat ready aircraft carriers, 10 carrier air wings, 170 squadrons and more than 100,000 personnel.

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